

Task Force Normandy Soldiers return to Virginia

The last groups of Soldiers assigned to the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, also known as Task Force Normandy, returned to Virginia July 27, 2016, after serving on federal active duty since September 2015. More than 450 Soldiers from units based in Winchester, Woodstock, Leesburg and Suffolk provided security for installations in the U.S. Army's Central Command area of operations in Qatar with just 90 days notice for the mission. The first groups of Soldiers returned to Virginia July 19.

"I'm very proud of the unit and the Soldiers of Task Force Normandy," said Lt. Col. Kurt Kobernik, commander of the battalion. "Their sacrifice and dedication to duty is humbling, and their performance in their jobs was nothing less than remarkable. They left their jobs, school and families with less than 90 days notice, and they improved the force protection at all three of our bases and maintained a positive attitude, which allowed us to accomplish things that most people told us could not be done."

As part of their security mission, Soldiers searched nearly 140,000 vehicles and more than 303,000 individuals.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/07/27/8993/>



Brig. Gen. Walter Mercer welcomes Lt. Col. Kurt Kobernik, commander of Task Force Normandy, back to Virginia July 27, 2016, marking the official end to the unit's federal deployment.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Red Dragons begin security mission in Qatar

Two Virginia Army National Guard units charged with the responsibility for security at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar, conducted a Relief In Place/Transfer of Authority ceremony July 11, 2016. Soldiers from the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, also known as the Red Dragons, assumed responsibility for the mission from the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, also known as Task Force Normandy.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/07/13/9013/>

Soldiers, Airmen train on communications system in Onancock

Soldiers and Airmen assigned to the information technology and communication sections of the Virginia National Guard joint staff and Army Guard staff trained on the Joint Incident Site Communications Capability July 13, 2016, in Onancock, Virginia.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/07/15/9005/>

329th RSG conducts staff planning exercise

Soldiers assigned the Virginia National Guard's Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group conducted a staff planning exercise focused on the Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration, or JRSOI, process in support of hurricane response operations July 14-16, 2016, at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/07/17/9009/>

Did You Know?

Financial counselor available

A new personal financial counselor has been assigned to the Virginia National Guard for the next 90 days and is available at no cost to assist with a wide variety of financial planning needs.

A PFC provides direct financial readiness education and counseling services on topics such as personal financial planning, budgeting, saving, reducing debt, retirement planning, deployment financial planning, understanding military pay and understanding state and federal financial benefits.

Visit <http://go.usa.gov/xYuV5> for more information.

Tajikistan senior leaders visit Virginia, Washington D.C.

Three members of the Tajikistan Ministry of Defense and two members of the Embassy of Tajikistan to the United States of America visited Virginia and Washington, D.C. July 15-18, 2016, as part of the National Guard State Partnership Program. During their trip, they met with members of the Virginia National Guard, the National Guard Bureau, the State Department and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

"For years we have worked with Tajikistan, and we have sent some of our best and brightest over there to share their knowledge and experience, but this year we had the great opportunity to bring their senior leaders to Virginia," said Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia. "Showing them the kind of units and installations we have as well as the training we conduct gives them a better understanding of where we can partner."

Williams stressed that something as simple as sharing a meal together helps build the bonds of mutual trust and respect that improves the strength of the partnership between Virginia and the Republic of Tajikistan. Among the visiting delegates, included Maj. Gen. Mirali Rahmatzoda, Commander of the Mobile Forces for the Tajikistan Ministry of Defense, who visited the United States for the first time.

"The strong relationship with Tajikistan is due in part to efforts from the State Partnership for Program," said Col. Michelle Rose, Virginia National Guard Director of Strategic Plans. The partnership between Virginia and the Republic of Tajikistan was formally established in 2003.

"It's obvious from the great relationship we have with the Tajiks that the State Partnership Program has come a long way since its inception," Rose said. "Just over the past five years, the senior leadership in the Tajikistan Ministry of Defense have noted that the support from the Virginia Guard assisting them with partnerships in infantry tactics, route clearance and CBRNE operations have been very helpful."

The five members of the delegation visited Fort Pickett, the Virginia National Guard Joint Operations Center in Sandston and Washington D.C. where they had the opportunity to visit training facilities, multiple ranges and national landmarks. They also had the opportunity to conduct strategic meetings with other critical United States senior leaders.

"Senior leader visits are important because what they learn helps steer the direction of organization," said Brig. Gen. Paul Griffin, Director of the Virginia National Guard Joint Staff. "There is no substitute for getting on the ground and seeing what's going on."

The National Guard's State Partnership Program links states and partner nations in support of mutual interests. The goal of the program is to establish broad reaching, friendly ties between partner states and partner countries at all levels of society utilizing the National Guard as the catalyzing force and means of support.

The State Partnership for Program is designed to be mutually beneficial for the governments involved. Some of the focus areas



Members of the Tajikistan Ministry of Defense and the Embassy of Tajikistan to the United States of America visit the Fort Pickett-based 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute July 18, 2016.

for the Virginia-Tajikistan security cooperation include medical exchanges, noncommissioned officer development and education, civil support team development, boarder security, peacekeeping operations development and emergency preparedness and disaster response.

"We plan on continuing this relationship in the future, especially in the area of disaster relief operation," Rose said. "The future is bright for this partnership and I see it only going up in the number of international engagements in regional exercises and assisting Tajikistan Mobility Forces in participating in peacekeeping operations, all while protecting their homeland."

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/07/20/8999/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Photos: Guard, VSP train on aerial water rescues

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157671511658515>

Photos: Snowdall takes command of Data Processing Unit

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157668309980703>

Photos: 116th MET teach trucks to Kazakhstani troops

https://www.facebook.com/steppeagle/photos/?tab=album&album_id=625126797651326

Task Force Normandy on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/3rdBattalion116thInfantry/>

329th Regional Support Group on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/329thRSG/>

State Partnership Program on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaGuardSPP/>



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